PRESS STATEMENT:

MALCOLM FRASER:

June 6th, 1965

This will be my last talk in this series because Parliament rose last week.

A number of matters were mentioned in debate in the Parliament however which I have not had time to report.

TRADE WITH UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES:

One of these concerns trade with under-developed countries. Australia has taken the lead of all countries in the world in offering concessions to a long list of under-developed countries which will enable their exports to enter Australia at preferential rates of tariff. Over one hundred countries are involved in this list.

The Government has taken this course because it recognises that aid alone is not enough if the under-developed countries are to raise their own standards and to provide a proper life for their own people. Aid must be followed with appropriate opportunities for trade. Most countries of the world want to pay their own way, they don't want to live on somebody else's charity. Under-developed countries would become resentful if the industrial countries offered aid of one kind or another and at the same time maintained barriers that made mutual trade impossible.

Australia has long argued that this kind of thing should be adopted in the forum of the general agreement of trade and tariffs. What we have done will, in fact, confront the G.A.T.T. with considerable difficulties because up to the present time the industrial nations in this Organization have set their faces against any new preferences in trading arrangements. Therefore, unless G.A.T.T. agrees to these new preferences offered by Australia it would be in contravention of this trade treaty to put them into effect. However, it may well be extremely difficult for G.A.T.T. to oppose these new preferences since their purposes is plainly to assist less developed countries to pay their own way in the world by offering them some more opportunity to trade with us. Indeed, it is our hope that many other countries in the General Agreement of Trade and Tariffs will accept this precedent and not only endorse these new preferences but also introduce preferences of their own designed to the same end.
COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION

Shortly before the Parliament adjourned for the recess the Prime Minister introduced two Bills that will continue for the next three financial years the Commonwealth grants for educational purposes that were introduced as a result of the last election policy.

The first of these Bills continues for a further three years annual grants of £5M, to the States for technical colleges and schools. These grants will operate in an area where independent schools do not exist and will therefore be confined to State institutions. They are intended to assist the training of young people in trade schools and technical colleges. Experience in the first year of the program has indicated that it fills an important place in the Australian education scene, and the Government has therefore introduced legislation to continue these grants on the same basis as for the first year for the next three years.

The second of these Bills is to continue for the next three financial years grants to secondary schools for the construction and equipment of science laboratories. Operation of the scheme in the first year has been successful; State Governments have been paid over £3½M. in the first year and this has resulted in the States being able to provide science laboratories and equipment in 293 more secondary schools than would otherwise have been possible. Victoria has taken the lead in providing additional facilities in 167 schools. £1,334,000 was provided in the first year for independent schools, most of which has already been paid to such schools. 189 independent schools will have been assisted, 120 of these will have grants for laboratories and equipment while the remainder will have grants for equipment only. At the present moment 703 independent schools are registered as being interested in receiving assistance.

The provision of a three-year program, making the same amount of money available in each year will help the schools plan their building program with the knowledge of the amount of assistance they will receive and when they will receive it. The funds will be divided in each of these three years as they have been divided in the past. The first year of both these schemes has demonstrated their worth to the general community. It should not be forgotten however that there is an over-riding general objective that we are pursuing with both these forms of assistance. A modern industrial nation requires an ever increasing number of technicians, technologists and scientists. The Commonwealth policy is designed to assist in the better training of such people. There has also been some suggestion in the past that science under-graduates in the Universities have not been able to take full advantage of scientific facilities available at Universities because of inadequate scientific training at secondary schools. Thus, it is hoped by these policies to up-grade and assist the quality of education in both these fields.
AUSTRALIAN DEVELOPMENT:

The Minister for National Development recently published a volume listing 339 development projects in Australia under construction, having an estimated completion value of £880M. Over the preceding two years 228 projects were completed at a cost of £223M. These figures do not include projects in the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Authority whose expenditure up to last year has totalled £240M.

It may be interesting to divide up some of these projects into their different types. There are 72 developmental projects concerning water conservation, supply and irrigation - to a total of £232M.; 68 programs concerning electricity transmission to a total cost of £306M; 20 railway projects costing £125M; 87 bridges costing more than a quarter of a million each to a total cost of £93M; 58 Port and Harbour projects will cost £77M. These are just some of the major items that are under construction at the present time. The values mentioned will be the values on the completion of the projects.

Australians are investing heavily in the future of their country so that we can produce more, grow more and support a larger number of people. In the long term this kind of development provides by far the best security for our future independence.

This is one of the things that highlights the present trip to Europe of the Minister for Immigration, Mr. Opperman. We have been extraordinarily successful in attracting migrants to this country, people who are needed to assist us in the development of Australia to make it the kind of country we hope and believe it will one day be. Mr. Opperman's visit will play an important part in seeing that our migrant program continues satisfactorily.